

# **FIELD IDENTIFICATION SKILLS CERTIFICATES (FISCs)**

**Does your work or voluntary activities include field botany and plant recording?**

**Do you want to quantify your plant ID skills?**

**Do you know where you are on the plant ID skills ladder?**

**If you want to find out more...**

**...read about FISCs – the definitive field skills certificates from the BSBI, administered by Manchester Metropolitan University.**



## FIELD IDENTIFICATION SKILLS CERTIFICATES

In 2006 the Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland trialled a new system for assessing skill levels for vascular plant identification, and this year Field Identification Skills Certificates (FISCs) are available for the ninth year.

### **What does a FISC entail?**

There are usually three parts to a FISC and it takes the best part of a day to take. There are two lab tests where a number of specimens are laid out for identification – the easier ones without books and keys, the more difficult with books and keys. After lunch there is a visit to a site where candidates record everything that they can see for roughly 1½ to 2 hours.

### **How long does it take?**

The FISC starts at about 10.45am and finishes about 5.00pm.

### **When do the FISCs run?**

In 2016, there are five dates from which to choose:

Thursday, 2<sup>nd</sup> June and Saturday, 16<sup>th</sup> July (Kent Wildlife Trust)

Saturday, 2<sup>nd</sup> July (University of Leicester, Botanic Garden)

Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> July (The Gateway, Shrewsbury)

### **Where?**

In Shrewsbury at The Gateway, Chester Street (Manchester Metropolitan University's Shrewsbury campus), just a three minute walk from the station. In Kent at the Kent Wildlife Trust Headquarters in Maidstone and in Leicester, at the University of Leicester's Botanic Garden.

### **How much does it cost?**

The FISC costs £60 to take and this includes lunch and transport to sites.

### **What do I need to bring?**

Identification books and a hand lens (although in an emergency we may be able to provide a lens and some identification guides). Lunch is provided and transport to sites is also provided by minibus.

### **What sort of plants will there be to identify?**

A wide range from a variety of habitats. The lab test will contain species that can potentially come from anywhere in the UK and they are not necessarily all common species.

### **Will I pass?**

You can't fail! The FISC test allows a skill level to be allocated to you. See the attached Botanical Skills Pyramid for the Skill Levels. You are awarded a certificate from the BSBI stating your skill level. You may wish to come back in a few years to take the FISC again to see how you have progressed.

### **Who runs the FISCs?**

The Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland awards the FISC. Manchester Metropolitan University provides study facilities, booking and marking services for the Shrewsbury FISCs. Kent Wildlife Trust and the University of Leicester provide the same for the Kent and Leicester FISCs.

### **How do I book?**

For the Shrewsbury dates, please fill in the attached booking sheet and return to Emma Hopkisson, Manchester Metropolitan University, The Gateway, Chester Street, Shrewsbury SY1 1NB. For the Kent and Leicester dates, please visit the BSBI website for booking details

[http://www.bsbi.org.uk/field\\_skills.html](http://www.bsbi.org.uk/field_skills.html) Email S.Wild@mmu.ac.uk if you have any queries.